

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02595 251113Z

ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2788

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, OEXC, SY

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SYRIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

REF: STATE 90386

1. PAN AMERICAN HAS CANCELLED PA 067, REQUIRING CHANGE TO TRAVEL PLANS. PARLIAMENTARIANS NOW DEPART DAMASCUS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 0735 VIA LH 615 FOR FRANKFURT. ETD FRANKFURT 1320, APRIL 27, VIA PA 073. ETA NEW YORK 1645 SAME DAY. ETD NEW YORK 1905, APRIL 27 VIA NA 428, ARRIVING WASHINGTON NATIONAL 2003.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES FIRST CLASS AUTHORIZATION GOOD IDEA. SHOULD HELP SET TONE FOR ENTIRE VISIT.

3. PROGRAMMING SUGGESTIONS FOLLOW:

KAYLANI AND AL-SHEIKH ARE WELL-KNOWN AND INFLUENTIAL POLITICAL FIGURES. (ABOUT KHADRA WE KNOW SOMEWHAT LESS.) ALL PARLIAMENTARIANS ARE INVOLVED IN THE RATIFICATION OF TREATIES AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS, AND ARE THUS IMPORTANT IN FINAL APPROVAL FOR SUCH PROJECTS AS AID GRANT/LOAN AGREEMENTS, THE SYRIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL AGREEMENT, THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT GOVERNING THE STATUS OF THE AID MISSION IN SYRIA. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT A HIGH-LEVEL

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VISIT TO AID, INCLUDING A GENERAL REVIEW OF PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE AID PROJECTS IN SYRIA WOULD BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL. SIMILARLY, A CALL IN CU WOULD BE BENEFICIAL. ALL THREE HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN VISITING RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN AGRICULTURAL FIELD. AL-SHEIKH IS FROM DEIR ES ZOUR AGRICULTURAL REGION IN EASTERN SYRIA, AND WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOME EXPOSURE TO

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATIONS DEALING WITH DRY-LANDS
FARMING.

THE GROUP IS ALSO INTERESTED IN SEEING WELL-KNOWN
TOURIST ATTRACTIONS, INCLUDING DISNEYLAND (DISNEY WORLD),
CAPE CANAVERAL SPACE CENTER, ROCKEFELLER CENTER, ETC.
OTHERWISE, EMBASSY BELIEVES VISIT SHOULD INCLUDE AT
LEAST ONE VISIT IN MAJOR GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS,
I.E., EAST, SOUTH, MIDWEST, WEST. HOME HOSPITALITY
WOULD BE VERY APPROPRIATE AS POSSIBLE.

4. GROUP HAS DECLINED \$50 TRAVEL ADVANCE.

5. CHARGE COMMENT: THIS FIRST SYRIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION
TO VISIT US SINCE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN 1974.
BENEFITS TO US-SYRIAN RELATIONS FROM SUCCESSFUL VISIT ARE
POTENTIALLY GREAT. IN ADDITION TO WARM WELCOME WHICH WE
UNDERSTAND IS BEING PREPARED FOR DELEGATION ON CAPITOL HILL,
WOULD HOPE MEMBERS COULD HAVE SUBSTANTIVE MEETING WITH ASST.
SECY. ATHERTON AND PAY COURTESY CALL ON SECRETARY. REQUEST
ALSO THAT ARRANGEMENTS BE MADE TO ASSIST THEM IN TRANSFERRING
FLIGHTS IN NEW YORK AND THAT THEY BE MET APPROPRIATELY UPON
ARRIVAL IN WASHINGTON.
PELLETREAU

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